



BULLETIN

from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

\$12 MILLION IN EXCISE TAXES SECURED FOR STATE WILDLIFE PROGRAMS

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced today that the Internal Revenue Service is transferring \$12 million in excise tax receipts from archery equipment to the Service to be distributed to the states for wildlife conservation and hunter education in the coming year.

The IRS earlier had decided to withhold the receipts collected on archery equipment between January 1997 and September 1997 while it switched from monthly transfers to quarterly transfers to the Fish and Wildlife Service of funds collected under the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration, or Pittman-Robertson, program.

The delay in transferring these funds would have meant the states would not have received the \$12 million until Fiscal Year 1999.

"Representative John Tanner of Tennessee played a pivotal role in convincing the IRS to make the transfer and insuring these funds will be available to states this year," said Service Director Jamie Rappaport Clark. "These excise taxes paid by archers directly support state wildlife conservation and hunter education so it was critical that they be made available. America's hunters and conservationists also can thank the IRS for their quick response in resolving this issue."

Clark also thanked the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and the Archery Manufacturers Organization for their support.

The IRS also decided not to make the switch from monthly to quarterly transfer of excise tax receipts to the Service. The Service reinvests these funds until they are distributed to the states, and the interest, by law, supports grant programs under the North American Wetlands Conservation Act. Therefore, the decision by the IRS will allow the Service to continue to generate about \$800,000 to \$1 million more in interest annually for these wetlands conservation program.

The Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration program is arguably the most successful conservation program in history. In the past 60 years, sportsmen and -women have paid more than \$3 billion in excise taxes used by the states on acquisition and improvement of wildlife habitat, introduction of wildlife into suitable habitat, research on wildlife problems, surveys and inventories of wildlife, acquisition and development of wildlife-related recreational facilities, and hunter education programs, including construction and operation of public shooting ranges.

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The money is derived from an 11-percent excise tax on sporting arms and ammunition, a 10-percent tax on pistols and revolvers, and an 11-percent tax on certain archery equipment. One-half of the tax on handguns and archery equipment is made available for state hunter education programs.

For Fiscal Year 1997, states received \$165.8 million in Pittman-Robertson grants. Under the parallel Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration program, or Wallop-Breaux, states received \$273.2 million in grants from excise taxes on fishing tackle and motor boat fuels.

-FWS-

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